

EAT UP \$100 AT ONE SITTING? EASILY! AREN'T OBLIGED TO BE A PIG, EITHER

"Can one man eat a hundred dollars' worth of food at one meal without making a pig of himself?" is a question often asked when newspapers publish reports of dinners that cost \$100 a plate, says M. W. Mount in the New York Tribune.

Celebrated maitre d'hotel of Gotham say he can. It all depends upon the rarity and unseasonableness of the viands he consumes and the age of the wines he orders.

"A man can, without discomfort, eat a hundred dollars' worth of food at a meal," said William C. Maschenheim, proprietor of the Hotel Astor, the other day. "Suppose he calls for a highly priced fish, which is brought here at great cost and difficulty from its home in the Caspian Sea, for sturgeon, from the Arctic; a delicate bird from Brazil and rare fruit from Java, with costly, fresh Russian caviar (and there are as many kinds of caviar as of tea). Let the meal be opened by green turtle soup made with fine wine, and continue with diamondback terrapin, canvasback duck and side dishes and sauces conceived of the most expensive articles out of season in the market. Such a menu could easily amount to \$100, for it costs as much to provide a specially rare dish for one person as for ten. Wines and cigars would make an additional \$50 bill dissolve like gelatin."

Nevertheless, it remains true that the decorations at the average high-priced dinner make up by far the larger portion of the cost of a plate, and the food comes in a poor second on the bill.

singers charge more to fill such scenes with notes of thrilling sweetness than average musicians demand for a live service. There is hardly any limit to what a dinner may cost where only rare plants and orchids are used in decorations; the richest table service is employed, and only the greatest singers are engaged, but without such "specialties," Delmonico's chef affirms, "one can get something nice for \$75. With wines and cigars one can get something very fine for \$100."

Sometimes the cost of souvenirs is included in the charge for a dinner, but not usually. Souvenirs and cigars are generally classed among the "extras" of a dinner suitably furnished with music, special service and decorations.

In this age the evolution of the gourmand is the gourmet. In another decade, predicts Metchnikoff, the tabloid bottle will supplant the banqueting board.

Gross as our eating habits may be today in the eyes of such scientists, we are, nevertheless, in table refinement so far ahead of the ancients in the matter of feasting that we may well know the threats of a "mummy" at our board in the shape of a tabloid bottle whose contents sound the knell of conviviality in the future.

Feasts of Lucullus

In comparison with the banquets of the ancients, "Little Tim" Sullivan's recent \$100 a plate dinner, James Haden Hyde's \$5000 "blowout" at the St. Regis, Senator Tom Grady's \$8000 spread at Denver and Young Meyer's

precious stones, and dancing and interludes, but with the greatest diversity of dishes and most elaborate cookery.

Caligula, according to Suetonius, spent nearly \$50,000 on one supper.

In reports of modern banquets, such as took place at Shandley's recently, we read of fountains charged with champagne, as though that were the acme of extravagance, but when Caligula felt a little bit reckless and extravagant he was wont to drink costly pearls dissolved in vinegar. Pearls were no more to him than are peas to his modern imitators. Cleopatra also had a weakness for the pearl cocktail on occasions when she gave one of those grand dinners for Marc Antony and his associates in room carpeted a cubit deep with rose blossoms. Verily, the ancients set a pace that a present-day exponent of practical politics or an opulent plumber can hardly keep up with, and which would soon bankrupt institutions even financially stronger than a great life insurance company.

And then the lands that were served on the tables of the Greeks and Romans! The confines of the known world were ransacked in search of fresh delicacies. And what competent and ingenious chefs they must have had in those days! Think of a whole pig boiled on one side and roasted on the other, stuffed with oil of thyme, mace, nutmeg, the yolks of eggs and various spices, and the impossibility of discerning how the animal had been killed or where the knife had separated its body. And that wonderful dish devised by Vitellius, which consisted of an ingenious mingling of the livers of charfish, the brains

although the vintages consumed averaged \$20 to \$30 a bottle.

The marriage feast of the Caliph El-ma-Moon continued for nineteen days, the father of the bride entertaining on the banks of the Tigris crowds which no palace could contain. Between the courses showers of gold coins, bags of ambergris, and, at length, balls of musk were scattered among them, the latter inclosing small papers, in each of which was a ticket for some of the different kinds of disposable property most valuable in Asia—land, slaves, horses, etc. A tray full of pearls was emptied by the bride's grandmother upon her and the Caliph as they sat in state.

The further back we go in civilization the magnitude of banquets continually increases if historians can be implicitly believed. There were the feasts of Alans and Bolshazzar, the former of whom feasted all the people of Shushan and the latter a thousand of his nobles.

How unbecomingly, in comparison with this capacious guest list, appears the

notably beautiful "Venetian dinner" recently given at the Hotel Astor by a bachelor to only thirty-nine guests at an approximate cost of \$10,000, when the banquet was spread with Venetian scenes and guests looked out of real Venetian windows upon such lovely gardens as one finds in Venice, while strains of music floated from gondolas whose gondoliers played and sang in a fashion to charm even Venice by its beauty.

Even in the Middle Ages we have accounts of banquets which in point of wastefulness would be difficult to surpass. Stowe, in his "Survey of London," shows from the accounts of the officers, or stewards, of Thomas Earl of Lancaster that the expenses of the earl during the years—1313—for the pantry reached the enormous sum of nearly \$100,000, or \$500,000. In the following reign, on the occasion of the marriage of his son, Lionel of Clarence with Violante of Milan, the King gave a banquet of thirty courses, and the fragments from the table fed a thousand persons. In Henry V's reign, Stowe tells us that Neville, Earl of Warwick, "was ever held in great favor by the commons of all the land on account of his hospitality in all places, wherever he went, and when he came to London he kept such a house that six oxen were eaten at breakfast. The coronation banquet of Edward III, cost a sum in those days equivalent to about \$200,000. At the marriage feast of Alexander III of Scotland and the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry III. of England, which was solemnized at York, the archbishop of that city presented the English King with sixty fat oxen, which were all consumed on the occasion.

In Queen Elizabeth's time the first course of a banquet is given as wheat or hummer, steamed broth or spinach broth, or smallage, gnel, or hoholot. The second consisted of fish, among which are lampreys, poor John, stock fish and sturgeon, with side dishes of porpoise. The third course comprised quaking puddings, blay puddings, bag puddings, white puddings and marrow puddings. Then came veal, beef, capons, humble pie, mutton, marrow pasties, Scotch collops, wild fowl and game. In the fifth course all kinds of sweets, creams in all their varieties, custards, cheese-cakes, jellies, warden pies, suckers, syllabubs and so on, to be followed perhaps by white chocolate, tansy cake. For drinks, ale, beer, wine, sack and numerous varieties of mead or metheglin.

On an important occasion which was honored by the presence of most of the English nobility the cooks who prepared the banquet entered into a competition as to which of them could design the most original dish. The cook who took the palm of merit sent in a sucking pig harnessed to a chariot plumed with strings of sausages. The notable show dishes of today, which figure so largely in the bill of expenses and contain so many costly ingredients, are intended to be looked at and not partaken of. The modern dinnerer would no doubt sniff disdainfully at some of these early times, which in those early times were considered delicacies; for example, the flesh of cranes, herons and hawks, and great pieces of whale and young porpoises.

Archbishop of York's Menu.

Previous to the Reformation the clergy kept right up with the procession in the way of elaborate and expensive entertaining, and so sumptuous were their dinners that a modern bishop would appear in comparison to be fastidious and clerical brother would seem not to like chicken at all!

At the installation of Ralph, Abbot of St. Augustine, Canterbury, in 1309, six guests were entertained with a dinner consisting of 2000 dishes. This brings us to the celebrated banquet given in 1470 by the Archbishop of York, which is said never to have been surpassed in England for the abundance of the comestibles consumed. And now, ye men with Van Wyckian appetites, what up your knives and sharp on your teeth for the gastronomic fray! Sixty cooks have prepared the repast! One thousand servants men wait on the outside of the banquet hall and five hundred and fifteen within! Here's the menu:

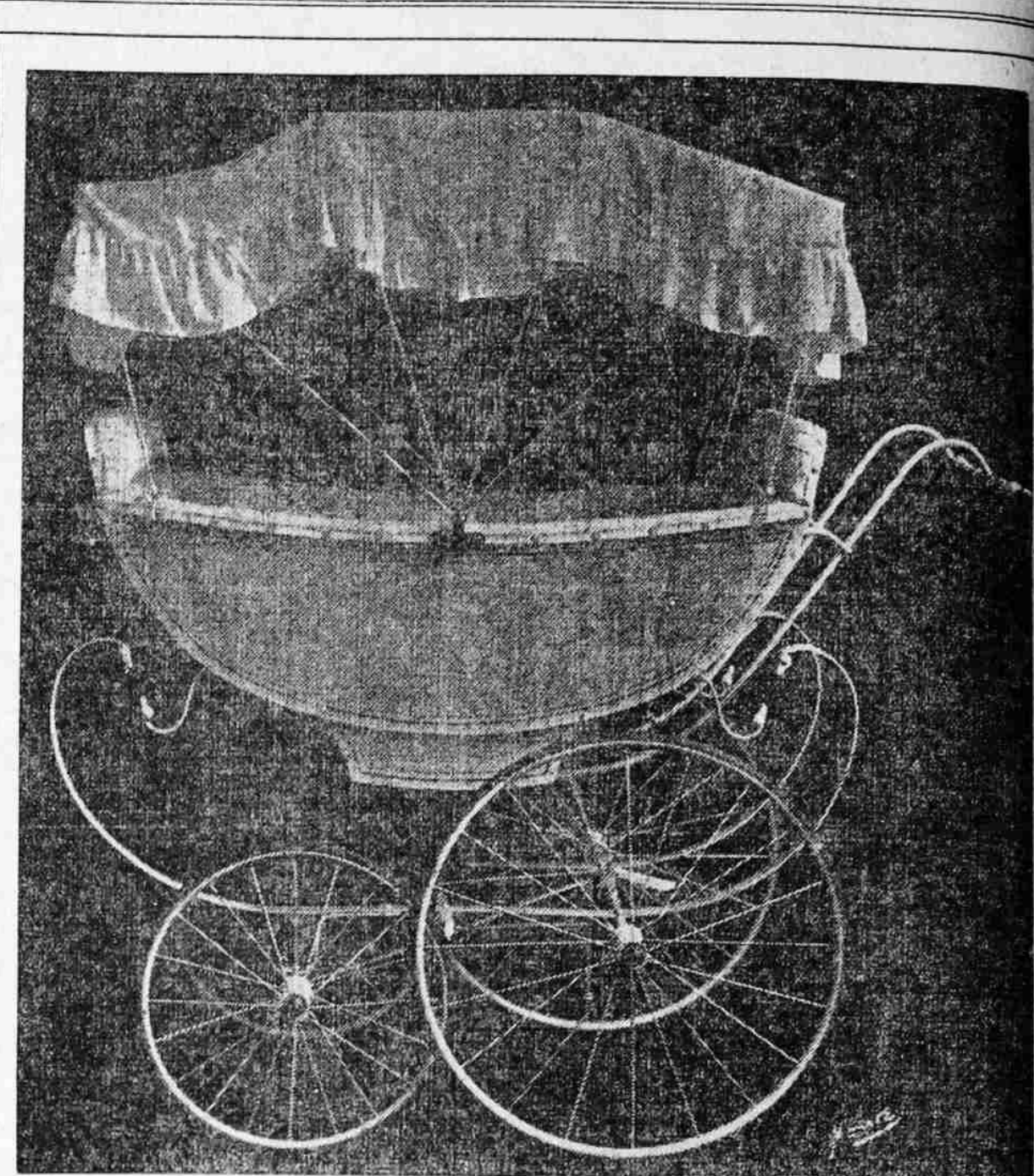
Three hundred and thirty tuns of ale, 100 hogheads of hipocras, 30 fat oxen, 6 wild oxen, 1004 sheep, 30 pigs, 300 sucking pigs, 300 calves, 3000 geese, 1000 capons, 200 peafowl, 200 cranes, 200 birds, 2000 chickens, 4000 pigeons, 4000 rabbits, 200 herons, 4000 ducks, 200 pheasants, 500 partridges, 400 snipe, 400 water hens, 100 quail, 1000 bitterns, 200 roes, 400 deer, 1500 venison, pasties of sweet silver, 300 jellies, 4000 bowls of sweet silver, 300 pikes, 300 breams, 8 dogfish, 4 dolphins and 400 fruit tarts.

With this menu compare that of a recent dinner of the Lucullus club of New York, whose epicurean banquet seems to shrink to the dimensions of an invalid dietary beside it, although costing over \$20 a plate:

Filet of Beef, Truss of Turkey, Lyonnais Oysters, Mixed Nuts, Olives, Green Turtle Soup, Boned Chicken, Cucumbers, Parsnips, Potatoes, Diamondback Terrapin, Asparagus, Canvasback Duck, Salad St. Georges, Romaine, Cheese, Lucullus, Cafe.

The French have excelled in amusements at their banquets, and some of the most original and ingenious. Let the modern dinner-giver seeking an outlet for extravagant display and the fashionable entertainers of Newport who are ever racking over their brains for novel and startling diversions take notice of this one at a dinner given by Charles V. to the Emperor of Germany toward the end of the fourteenth century. It has been graphically described thus:

"A ship with masts, sails and rigging was seen first; she had for colors the arms of the city of Jerusalem; Godfrey de Bouillon appeared on deck, accompanied by several knights armed cap-a-pie; the ship advanced into the middle of the room or hall without the machine which worked it being perceived."



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